BASIC PRINCIPLES

Of

SANATAN DHARMA

And

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

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KASHMIR VEDIC BHAWAN

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Affiliated to Bharati Vidya Bhawan

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NOTICE

At the end of the Dharmic text an attempt is made to give an outline of the Socio - Religous Code - a way of life and living. Members of the Community twenty years and above in age are requested to give their approval by filling in the form at the end of the pamphlet. The form may please be handed over or sent by post to the Secretary, Kashmir Vedic Bhawan, S. R. Gunj Srinagar (190002). Kashmir, On receipt of this a meeting of a representative body of the Community will be Convened to give a final shape to the Socio - Religious Code. If additional forms are required these can be got from the secretary.

TWO WORDS OF MY GOOD WISHES

I have gone through this booklet, "The Basic Principles of Sanatan Dharma", and feel this book will be useful for all Hindus in deriving information about the Hindu religion. In this book the unity of God Head, manifestation, rebirth, Karma, yajna, and the worlds visible and invisible are discussed.

I hope the readers will be elevated by going through this book, because they will get all the information of our social and religious life.

Swami Lakshman Joo
Ishwara Ashram, Nishat.

Much can be done in the direction of Hindu consolidation if only......a new Smriti or code be observed by the Hindus eliminating repugnant aspects contained in some of the ancient Smritis and retaining what is relevant to the present times.

Dr. B. V. Raman
Editor,
The Astrological Magazine
Bangalore.

INTRODUCTION

This is an attempt at presenting a basic outline of Vedic Dharama-Sanatan Dharama or Hinduism. It is addressed to Hindus of all denominations in India and outside, in general. In particular, it is meant for the Pandits of Kashmir wherever they be. The thinking that prompted the Vedic Bhawan to undertake a project like this will get clear by what follows.

In the absence of any organised institution big or small, the young men of the community are not inducted into the basic principles of the eternal Hindu Religion. All the off-hand knowledge or information about the Vedanta, Yoga, Bhagvadgita, Ramayana, different forms of worship, and other observances (Karamkand) does not give a comprehensive picture of this religion. An integral view of the great Dharama does not get developed in the mind thus. If questioned to describe shortly what Hinduism is and this happens often-our youths find themselves unable to do so.

Traditionally, home transmitted the Hindu culture to the children. In fact theory and practice were both available at home. By the passage of time home has ceased to discharge this very important function. Unhappily there is no other agency responsible for doing this. Inside and outside home, the traditional "Purohits"-commonly known as Brahmans-because of their knowledge and position were imparting orally or even through text-books much of the Hindu lore to the young and old of the community. Today there is a qualitative as well as a quantitative decline in the purohit class.

There are many ceremonies, observances and "Samaskars" solemnised in the home. Nearly all the young men observe these in a routine manner, mechanically without understanding the logic or even the underlying meaning of these ceremonies. In due course this gives birth to agnosticism. The youngmen generally come under the influence of the propoganda machinery of other religions. They even defy all the religions and become so called Neo-

empiricists. They then repudiate metaphysics and pass through material existence in pursuit of mammon only.

The regular observance of the traditional ceremonies with the active participation of "Purohits" is not possible for a large number of brilliant youngmen, spread over in this country, in different states and outside India for non-availibility of purohits. They do not have even the benefit of any pertinent guiding literature.

The present is the scientific age. Man is emerging in space-age from the Atomic one. The scientific temper is with us. It demands scientific interpretations of the eternal values of Dharama, if we are not to become colourless, cultureless human vagrants. The community is experiencing the effects of the industrial revolution. We may feel it or not, its full blast is yet to come. The industrial onslaught has shaken even well-organised European communities. In the west, the social, educational and religious thinkers in conjuction with the well organized church tried hard to retain and preserve basic cultural values. These were and are being given scientific colour and shape and are being woven into the present-day life-activities of the people and specially with the play-activities of childern and the youth.

The industrial wave will sweep clean all the dross meaningless customs, observances which are with us under the guise of religion or which for most of us represent the Dharama. The great Hindu society is itself disorganized, with no central religious authority. It is split up into many denominations out of which a few are socially well knit, while many are unorganised and indisciplined.

The Kashmiri Hindu community is socially loose with no central guiding, directing or care-taking body. It is a community by all the definitions of a compact social unit. But because of its inherited or acquired social laxity it appears and many feel it to be not a community.

Kashmiri Hindu community has a brilliant history. It has given birth to able kings, generals, historians. sages, saints, builders architects, religious preachers etc. The community has common

traditions, mores, institutions and literature. It is infact a well-knit community passing at present through socio-economic crises.

It is a religious minority. Unfortunately it is not taken for a backward community even though all channels of economic subsistance are blocked. Incentives, scholarships for technical and educational studies are not available. Agricultural land has been given to the tillers of the land. But very few of the members of this community are land-tillers. Not to speak of industries, there are very few in trade. This pen-picture of the community is not, of course, fully drawn, but it will suffice to present a rough outline. The picture will close up some-what when social and religious looseness of the community is also taken into consideration.

Many avenues for rapid economic development are available in the present times. The development of arts and crafts is receiving much attention from the Government. Not only energy but money too is made available for small - scale industries. There is thus enough scope, specially for young men, to get stabilized financially. Infact, never before was there such a wide field open for people to adopt profitable industrial pursuits. Trade is expanding and the automobile industry is growing greatly. These days there is open scope for earning honest livelihood for youngmen, if only they are ready to use their brain and brawn.

There is a favourable climate just now for young men and women for opting and adopting technical pursuits. But because of lack of incentives from the Government and private entrepreneures the bulk of the educated young men are unemployed and uncared for. The Government of the day is expected to stabilise the young growing generation of the minority community through the present day system viz. scholarship, or loan etc ; as otherwise the unemployed, jobless youngmen may become a problem, of course, for the community but more so for the state. Because of this many able youngmen and women of the community are languishing in idleness proving a burden for the home and ultimately a burden for themselves. Exact figures of the unemployed and jobless young people are not available because the

community has not taken the trouble to conduct such a survey. It is, however, feared that the percentage is quite large.

There are also some social and psychological causes for this phenomenon. It is the product of a deep social malady. In this small community there are many social customs and practices ruinous in effect but prevalent under the garb of Dharama. The Pristine, beautiful lifegiving and lofty principles of thə vedas, Upanishads, vedanta. Trika philosophy, yoga, etc. are pushed to the background while caste practices, touch me not "Souch", widowhood perpetrated under social compulsions, mal-treatment and negligence of "Samaskars" are given preference and undue importance. To an outsider it appears as a queer medley of meaningless, harmful, nonsensical, usages, customs and rites. A keen eye, however, discerns in these observances and practices of the community a fully working principle of self-annoyance, self-annihilation and self imposed genocide.

The unassailable religious principles, refreshing and scientific philosophy of Vedanta and Yoga, are proving as divine gifts in the present highly materialistic age. Hinduism has given rise to a series of saints and savants unequalled in the religious history of any country and any religion. The community is, however, content with its thorny husk and the life sustanining inner seed is thrown away.

Over and above suffering from true religious starvation, the community is also devoid of any cooperative, and corporate effort. A small well-knit community like this could work out wonders in real cooperative, social living. As against this even minor real problems of the community are unresolved. The small "purohit" unit is fast declining. They are economically worst hit. Naturally the "purohits" are adopting other alternative lucrative professions. The community has not developed a system whereby "purohits" could derive a regular stable, monthly income. And it is not difficult to devise a simple, workable plan for this. There are no "pracharaks" and really no workable plan for, religious teachers. Youngmen remain unmarried. Wholesome, heal-

thy avocations are avoided and petty clerical and other jobs are prized. A baker cannot but a baker's clerk can secure a marriage, is an old truth. Widows unable to re-marry through social will are made to fend for themselves. Nearly all of them live a life of destitution. They undergo untold misery but community is woefully unconcerned. The "Have nots" in the community are given a severe beating at the hands of "Haves" as they go on fattening the dowry system. Many newly-wed brides suffer untold miseries and some of them find refuge in the bosom of mother "Vitasta". But the conscience of the community is not at all pricked, as if these young women are so many pieces of useless furniture.

The community has to remember that the liberation of the individual can come only through the welfare and liberation of the community as a whole and not through individualization as is happening at present. Individuals follow their own whims and idiocyncracies and create a hell for others as well as for themselves in the long run. Does this at all look like a religious unit? Is there in it any semblance of spirituality? This is a hell of a social order, created by all of us for ourselves. Religion is truely and should truely be for the service of man. Markandaya Puran proclaims, "I long not for a kingdom or heaven or rebirth, my only desire being removal of suffering of all creatures tormented by misery".

We are confident that the time is now ripe for a little heart-searching and metamorphosis, for a basic reform in the socio-religious life of the community. There is a real need to give to ourselves a new socio- religious code : a Dharama-Shastra, in accordance with the need and exigencies of the present time, based on eternal values of the shruti.

In a very loose religious and social order of Hindus the birth and then the acceptance of another Manu, Yagnavalkya cannot be envisaged in near future. Manu also visualized and permitted necessary changes in the Manava-Dharama-Shastra. In a democratic and scientific age, in which we find ourselves, the social group can function, as the Socio-religious LAW GIVER.

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PREFACE

Hinduism is the name given to Sanatana Dharama. Sanatana means eternal and Dharama can roughly be equated with religion. Infact there is no word in the English Language or equivalent word in any other religion for Dharama. Dharama is a comprehensive word ; it includes and it pervades all the life activities.

Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world. It is eternal, because the great truths taught in it are eternal. The foundation of Hinduism rests on the Vedas which are four in number. These were spoken by the Rishis, as taught by Brahma. Because of this the name given for the Vedas is Shruti. The Vedas tell us every thing about the creator, creation and man. It teaches us how to live and how to worship.

Smriti is the name given to other books given by Rishis. It contains the Dharama Shastras, the great Puranas and the two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

The Hindu religion teaches that there is one Boundless Eternal, Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is "One without a second." He is spoken of as Brahman, or as Para-Brahma in all the Sacred Books. He is also The All, because of containing all that ever has been, is, or will be.

A brief outline of the Hindu religion is attempted here. It is arranged in three parts. The first part explains the fundamental principles. The second part deals with the Hindu religious customs and rites and the third part deals with the ethical teaching so comprehensively based on Hindu religion.



FOUNDATION OF HINDU DHARAMA

Shruti consisting of the Chaturveda is supreme authority of Sanatan Dharama. The four Vedas are: Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. Each Veda is divided into:

(i) Mantra or Samhita
(ii) Brahman

The Upanishads consist of deep philosophical teachings on the nature of Brahman or the Supreme and the separated self; or man and the universe; on bondage and liberation.

All the sects of Hindus appeal to the Shruti as the final authority to resolve their disputes. Shruti is the foundation of the Eternal or the Universal religion and is unchangeable.

The Smriti, or Dharama Shastra, stands next in authority to the Shruti and consists of four great works, written by sages. These contain laws and regulations for conduct of individual, family, social and national life. The Hindu society is founded on and is governed by these laws. There are four Dharama Shastras. These are:—

1. Manu Smriti or Manava Dharama Shastra, The Institution of Manu.
2. Yajnavalkya Smriti.
3. Shankha Likhita Smriti.
4. Parashara Smriti.

The first of these is the chief compendium of Aryan law. The Yajnavalkya Smriti follows nearly the same general line as the Manu Smriti and is next in importance to it.

The other two are not now referred to except in some parts of Southern India.

In addition there are Puranas. These consist of histories stories and allegories, composed for the use of less learned part

of the nation. Some of the allegories, however, are difficult to understand and require the help of a teacher.

The Itihasa comprise two great poems. These are :—

1. The Ramayan. This is the history of Shri Ramchandra, the son of King Dasharatha and of his wife Sita and his brothers.

2. The Mahabharata, the history of Kurus, a royal family of Northern India, which split into two parties, the Kurus and Pandavas between whom a great war broke out. It contains a large number of beautiful stories, noble moral teachings, useful lessons of all kinds. Bhagwadgita, the Song Celestial, is also contained in it.

THE SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY OF SANATAN DHARAMA.

The Shruti, the Smriti, the Puranas and the Itihas form the edifice of Hindu Religion. They have, however, given rise to a splended literature of science and philosophy.

The science divided into Shadang, the six (Angas), Limbs composed of Grammar, Philology, Astrology, Poetry and sixty four sciences and arts. The Philosophy also had six divisions, the shaddarshanani, the six Dharshanas or ways of seeing things. These are usually called the six systems.
These are :—

1. The Nyaya and the Vaisheshika. These explain that the material world is made out of atoms and molecules, that knowledge is gained through inference and analogy etc. The highest and the most useful knowledge is the knowledge of God, who is also the inmost spirit of man.

2. The Sankhya explains in more detail the nature of Purusha, spirit and of Prakritih, Matter and their mutual relationship.

3. The Yoga of Patanjali gives method of seeking God which is the true, inmost spirit by developing five senses, five organs of action and other subtler senses etc.

4. The Memansa explains Karma or action and how it binds man to this or the other world.

5. The Vedanta finally tells fully what is the exact and true nature of God or Atman. It says that Jiva is in essence the same as the God, the seeming duality can vanish through the true knowledge of jnana - and practice of yoga.

PART I

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

OF

SANATAN DHARAMA

1. The Unity of God-head
2. The Descent or the Manifeststion of the Many.
3. Rebirth
4. Karma
5. Yajna - Sacrifice
6. The Worlds-Visible and Invisible



THE ONE EXISTENCE OR THE UNITY OF GOD-HEAD

Shruti "There is only one Infinite, changeless existence, from that all comes forth, to that all returns"

"Only one, without a second"

Bhagvat Puran:

"At the beginning of creation I alone subsisted, the one beyond the manifest and unmanifest and nothing else. And it is I alone who survives the creation. This phenomenal world is nothing but myself and whatever remains after that is also myself".

Bhagvad Gita (IX-4)

"By me, the formless, all this world is pervaded, all beings have root in me, I am not rooted in them".

Gita (XIII-16)

"Brahman is everything and comprises everything and is yet distinct".

Brahman is one. He is the supporter. He is the growth of growth, the intelligence of intelligence and the consciousness of consciousness.

Brahman by virtue of itself is:

(a) Transcendant - Beyond Cosmos.

(b) Immanent in the Cosmos.

The universe is the becoming of the Being. This is the primary truth of Religion. Men have given different names to the All. In Vedas the name is Brahman.

The All, Changeless Existence is the Nirguna Brahman without attributes or the unconditioned Brahman.

The Saguna Brahman is Brahman revealed, Brahman with attributes or the conditioned Brahman. Ishvar is the Great Lord of Becoming. He is the self-existent One, the root and cause of all beings. He is also called the supreme Spirit or the Self. The Supreme Spirit also reveals, cognizes the Mula-prokriti, the root of matter. Matter (Prakriti) takes form and assumes bodies of all sorts, shapes and kinds.

The indivdual, the jiva is nothing but the spark "Amusha" of the same supreme - Light, Energy, Force which in the last analysis is Consciousness.

Matter and spirit are not really two different entities. It is the spirit, (the shakti) which assumes forms. In the universe it is the energy which is observed and experienced in different forms and which becomes gross matter. Matter seemingly devoid of life is full of energy and organization. This is depicted by the inside of an Atom. ,, 'The atom iooks like a miniature universe, full of life, motion and energy' '. Infact there is immense movement inside matter. There is movement in everything and everything is in motion. Matter is being created and destroyed and recreated. It is in flux.

The whole ensemble of the universe with its galaxies nebulae, stars and suns with its planets etc. some well formed, some in formation and some disintegrating are transformations and appearances of the great Energy or shakti. All these seem to us to be perenneal. But Nature is subject to its own laws, its own life cycle and infact creation in its various forms have their own life cycles.

The great scientist, Eienstein who established the equivalence of matter and energy has shown that gross and subtle matter constituting the universe is nothing but an inexplicable force. The scientists are merely observing, experimenting and trying to use or harness a little of this force or energy but the Energy or the Force in itself remains inexplicable. Eienstein postulated a unified Field Theory which is the basis of the universe. This says that the matter in all its multiplicity - the phenomenal world-is in reality one inexplicable force or energy and nothing else.

Vedic Dharama - religion - is not concerned just now with the physical or other properties of this Energy. This is the domain of science and it seems possible that within a few decades a further view of the energy its basic nature, its basic unity will be brought out by scientists.

Hindu religion that is the Shruti affirms that the transcendant and the immanent, are only one infinite, changeless exis-

tence and matter and spirit are not really two different entities. Full understanding of the one Existence gives a clear vision of liberation and bondage. This will throw light on and prescribe the Hindu way of life based on Rebirth, Karma etc. and on highest moral values.

THE MANIFESTATION

"All this we see was duly created by God. He it is who preserves it and having disintegrated it at the time of dissolution makes it disappear. He goes on repeating this again and again for ever.

"Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal, no sign was there to mark off the night from day. That one, the Breathless breathed by His own nature, apart from him there was nothing whatsoever.

"Darkness there was first concealed in darkness. All this was undiscriminated and diffused. Then it was covered by the Void, the great pervading Principle of the universe. By the great power of "Tapas" was produced that One- the universe,.

"In the beginning was desire - the primal bud of design (of the universe.). The wise sages searched with their hearts thoughts & discovered the relation of the "Sat" with the Asat.

"This visible and multifold universe was made by God & He alone sustains and dissolves it and does not make it again for a period. He is the Lord of all this. The entire creation exists in Him. He pervades everywhere like space and in his ,Smarathya- the final material cause - it is absorbed at the time of dissolution. O friend, Jiva, he who knows him attains to the highest bliss, but, he who does not know him the highest object of desire of all men, all existence, all consciousness, all bliss and eternal, does not verily obtain the highest beautitude".

Rég Veda (10-129)

There was primordial matter and the force of the Great Lord of creation acted on it and put it in motion.

Rég veda (10-81-7)

The primordial matter first existed in the smallest forms of "paramanus" (the smallest particles which were invisible and inert). This matter was then in a state of equilibrium. The three qualities of matter were 'sattava', 'rajas' and 'tamas'. These are called 'Ghana Vidyut. Rin Vidyut, Shunya—(Protones, Electrons and Neutrons)

Yajur Veda (14-31)

When matter is in 'Sami' State—in equilibrium—these qualities are dormant. When the force—will—of Para Brahma acts, motion is given to these 'paramanus' and these qualities begin their work—particles rotate and mix with other particles. This state is called 'Mahat'.

(Rig Veda 1-164-31)

The next stage is that of 'Ahankar'—(uniting of particles of different elements) then 'Tanmatras' are formed, ten senses five gross elements and four 'Antahkaran—mind, chit, intellect and ego. These are made of finer particles of matter. These twenty four elementary things form all the objects and substances organic and inorganic, in this world. The twenty fifth thing are souls which on entering in bodies of human beings becomes born as youthful men and women in the beginning.

(Rig Veda 5-59-6)

Birth of human beings comes later on after vegetables and animals.

(Rig Veda 8-90-14)

All objects and substances which are material are made of these five elements in fine and gross form. Each one of the five elements, ether (Akash). Air (Vayu), Fire (Agni), water (Apa), Earth (Prithvi) contians all elements previous to it in order. Ether is invisible, all pervading and inert. It does not exist in molecular form but is always as paramanus. Air is invisible, it has motion, Fire is invisible and visible, it has form, it gives heat and light, it is weightless, Water has form and it becomes invisible in the gaseous form. It is loose, it flows and has velocity. Earth is visible, it has form, it has weight. The principle of ether is sound, the principle of air is

touch, the principle of water is taste and the principle of earth is smell.

(Atharva Veda 12-1-23)

All other substances are made of these.

Note :— Vedic science does not admit the existence of any other element, while modern science counts them as more than hundred. All these are compounds and mixtures of these five elements.

Devas are the forces or powers which are there to carry out to administer the laws of Ishvara.

Sagun Brahman, the great Lord af Being, thought and bliss manifests as Trimurti as the universe- Brahmanda—the egg of Brahma falls into shape, into orderly system of worlds. Trimurti are the three aspects of Ishvara. As Brahma He creates the worlds, as Vishnu, He preserves, takes care and maintains the worlds and as Shiva, He dissolves the worlds when of no further use.

The Ishvara as Vishnu clothes the forms, preserves the same. He breaths His life into all these forms, becomes Prana and consciousness. In this way the Brahmanda becomes full of life and conscious-ness. As Shiva, forms are dissolved and Jivas are liberated to be united with Being.

The Divine spark, consciousness takes form, develops, manifests and then gets union with the source. This is the triple Jiva of man, the perfect reflexion of the triple Ishvara.

The creation takes shape and the Jiva begins his long evolution. It takes Kalpas- -millions of years - for the human Jivas to evolve through the mineral, vegetable and animal kingd-oms. In human form the mortal desires the immortal and ultim-ately assumes, becomes, acquires the Divine consciousness.

Evolution is the process of the Physical, mental and the spiritual development of the life principle. Man has evolved to the present form from the single protoplasm which contained the original Energy.

WATERS OF LIFE

Life appeared in water first and slowly and gradually evolved to the present form. The evolutionary process, however, as observed now was not a uniform and a very simple process. The biological structure and the accompanying mental pparatus had to evolve, adapt, change and to readapt over and over again. The main purpose of evolution was and is to fashion out a physico-mental frame in which the Divine could shine forth and get united with the source. The Divine purpose embedded as operative energy in the primal manifestation evolved slowly and perfected the human form. Evolution proceeded from one stage to another in which both the physical and the concurrent mental structure asumed a new and better vehicle. At each major change or epoch divine help was needed in greater measure and so special manifestations of Vishnu called Avataras appeared. The purpose of the Avatar was to guide and to give a push to the develcpment in the right direction.

Ten of the Divine Avatars are regarded as more important than the others. These are:

1. Matesya, the Fish
2. Kurma, the Tortoise.
3. Varaha, the Boar.
4. Narasimha, the Man-Lion,
5. Vamana, the Dwarf.
6. Parashurama, Rama with the Axe.
7. Ram-Ramchandra, the son of Dasharatha.
8. Krishna. the manifestation of Divine love and wisdom.
9. Buddha, Shakyamuni Gautama the Buddha
10. Kalki, the Avatara who shall close the kaliyuga and who

is yet to come.

The process of perfection of the human type is very well indicated by these avataras.

These avatras very clearly and graphically describe the process of evolution of life from the watery appearance to the present stage. The inner story of the evolutionary process is the spiritual development of man—the making clear of the path and the process for the Divine attainment.

REBIRTH

The, human being, is engaged in the process of evolution. The J'iva, passes from body to body, unfolding its powers. This is rebirth, reincarnation or trans- migration of soul.

The Jiva, is a part of Brahman. "A portion of myself, a Jiva,". says Sri Krishna. The Jiva is really an "Amush," a portion of the Being. The Jiva begins his long pilgrimage through the physical world in the mineral kingdom and through evolution becomes Ishvara. He can become nothing else because his nature is the same as that of his parent Brahman.

Everything on this earth exists, seems to exist for a while and gets transformed into something else. All the chemical, biological and other processes which maintain this planet and all that lives on it are always active and in motion, one thing so to lives and in the mere process of living, gives rise to another. Movement is the index of life. It is this motion or the change involved in it, which appears as living which in the nature of things is in flux and appears as dying. All these are basically mere energy transformations but apparently appear as contradictory processes.

The two seemingly opposite processes of life and death are infact involved one in another. In the words of Davies and day, "Life and death areconcomitant processes. Life has death in its very heart. Life involves dying and in a sense actually consists of dying, just as dying consists of living, as the very substance of death is the substance that lives".[1]

It is the jiva, the primal spark that lives, that passes from one appearance to another. This forms the chain of rebirths.

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1. Water, the mirror of science K. S. Davis and J. A. Day (1968.)

KARMA

Karma means action. It is the law of Action and Reaction. Karma is a Chain action between what is being done now and what will happen in the future. Things do not happen by accident, by chance, in a disorderly way. They happen in a regular succession following each other in a regular order.

"As one sows so does one reap," is a common aphorism. Rice produces rice plants, barley produces barley and a thistle produces thistle. Karma is a compound of action, thought and desire. Action has thought behind it. Thinking shapes Character. Man acts according to his character, But thought has desire behind it. Desire brings or attracts the object wished for. As a magnet attracts soft iron, so does desire attract objects. The chain of action and thought again starts. This cycle is the endless chain of Karma.

Every act of a living being done knowingly or unknowingly irrespective of whether it is yet in the stage of latency or thought form, a mental vibration uttered by word of mouth or actually done by a physical act constitutes Karma. Every deed every word and every thought is an action and the resultant impression of this in the mind is a reaction. This Law of Action and Reaction is the Law of Karma.

Life is a Continuous chain of which the links are: single cell, plant life, animal life, and man. These links are infinite but the single process is the process of evolution.

A seed gives rise to a tree. Nothing can be evolved which is not already there. Evolution does not come out of nothingness, it comes out of previous involution. The seed is the tree involved and the tree is the seed evolved. Each evolution presupposes an involution. Evolution is divergence and involution is convergence. life from the lowest state is struggling to evolve to the highest state. This proceeds through a cyclic process of involution and evclution.

Man is the highest specimen in the process of evolution. Plant life, animal life and man begin from the protoplasm. That

being so, as established by science, however, long the journey be, the single cell, the protoplasm is the first point from which man originated. Then the protoplasm must have contained the energy which evolved through the ages. The emergence of protoplasm or the first convergence of psychic energy to the protoplasm is involution and the manifestation of man through the whole cycle from the protoplasm is evolution. The endless cycle of births and deaths controls the evolution of life as of mind and this cycle will continue for ever.

The secret of evolution is for the "Amush" the divine spark the consciousness to manifest, unfold and to attain to its full stature. There is an urge in each one of us to attain to higher levels of existence, to become a superman, and to attain absolute freedom, perfect peace and true happiness. The human being is the supreme creation of the universe and it is only in this life that liberation is possible.

The different branches of science demonstrate that the universe in its entirety must be regarded as one gigantic process, a process of becoming, of attaining new levels of existence and organization. This is properly called a genesis or evolution. The gradual evolution of mind in the universe is called cosmogenesis. In man it is the mental properties of living matter - awareness-which becomes the most important characteristic of life.

Nature has gifted man with a conscious mind and this gift has made him accountable for his actions. Karma is the link between the activities of ."the conscious mind" of the past life and that of the present life, and the present life and future life-a continous chain of action and reaction. Karma points to a design a definite purpose behind all events, ordinary, serious or even cataclysmic. It makes us the architects of our own future. Man is simultaneously himself, an individual, a part of mankind, and an abridged version of the universal consciousness, the Creator. There is a natural law of action for the species, and a natural law of action for the individual within the species. This giant wheel of action and reaction, or accountability of man, will keep

on moving from its own inertia till a particular conscious mind burns all the karmic load by its deeds and the self becomes free and immortal, which is the goal of life. The universe is a huge laboratory on a cosmic scale and its scientist - the Absolute - seems to be carrying out a universal experiment, in which apparent errors and failures of its important constituent, man lead to results which have to be reaped either now or later, for His time is Eternal. The conscious mind's actions and reactions are carried by the self when it casts off a worn out physical sheath and manifests in another body. The Law of Karma is Nature's stubborn and inexorable law from which there is no escape.

The law of Karma in the popular usage is wrongly equated with fatalism. If this half truth is not challenged it will bring in its wake the idea of inevitability of whatever is to happen and so it will inhibit individual and national initiative and progress. It is hence necessary to understand the law of Karma in full. This is explained by swami chinmayananda. "The law of karma, when completely declared insists upon a scientifically unassa'lable truth. The present is the product of the past, and the future is the past "modified" in the present. The present with reference to the past is already made (destiny) but as far as the future is concerned, by the very texture and quality of our present thoughts and by the quality of our present actions-self effortd-urushartha - we are ordering and building the future.

In short, what we meet in life is "destiny" (prarabdha) and how we meet is self - effort (purushartha) It is in fact how we meet and how we modify the present that is the guarentee for individual development and ultimate evolution. If purushartha -self effort - is denied, if it were not there then the very idea of evolution and the fact of Moksha self - realization would become futile. The law of Karma makes a man responsible for his actions and at the same time an architect of his destiny. The idea of accountability for his actions converts man into a moral man without the parapharnelia of preaching from pulpits and plat - forms

YAGNYA - SACRIFICE

Creation is Sacrifice. The process of creation is a spiritua Act of the Supreme Being, through a sacrifice in which the absolute reveals his splendour. Ishvara the infinite appears as finite in matter in the universe and the universe becomes manifest. The basic sacrifice is the bringing forth of Jivas as separate portions giving rise to variety of forms. Conversion of and immersion in matter, speaking spiritually, is death. Ishvara is engaged in this supreme yagnya. This is the primary sacrifice. This is the law. This sets the pace for what follows. The Law of sacrifice is the law of life. It is the law in this world and it is the law for all Jivas.

The creation, born out of an act of sacrifice, is sustained by sacrifice. Everything evolves through sacrifice. Lower forms are used to maintain higher forms. This is true both in animate and so called inanimate forms. A candle cannot light a room unless it burns itself. water is the seed - bed of life. water is possible only through the self annihilation that is sacrifice of two gases with characteristics entirely different and opposed to that of water.

These two examples show that the chemical and the biol-ogical processes which ultimately sustain the universe are possible only through the acts of sacrifice.

Man is not a solitary, an isolated figure in the world. His life and all other lives are interdependent and can only pro-sper permanently as they recognize this interdependence. As a man lives on others he must in common honesty live for others. It is a debt, a duty which he must pay by sacrifice. Sacrifice is a thing that ought to be done because it is owed.

As man grows and evolves, he recognizes his identity in nature with Ishvara. Sacrifice becomes a delight and the pouring out of life for others is felt as a joyous exercise of innate divine powers. Instead of seeing how much he can take and how little he can give he tries to see how little he can take and how much he can give. Then he soon becomes a philanthropist, arr-

anges orphanages, hospitals, educational centres etc, or throws himself in social uplift and serves Daridranarayan in many ways.

The law of sacrifice is the path of living of a human being. Let not a single man retard or stop the cycle of sacrifice which maintains man, maintains a nation and so on. That man is really a sinner, who lives only for himself and at the expense of others.

"The righteous, who eat the remains of the sacrifice are freed from all sins, but the impious who dress food for their own sake verily eat sin". Bhagvad - geeta - III

As man begins to work for others, to live for others, he himself gradually helps his own evolution. He gradually begins to feel more really his non - separateness from other - selves and then from the universal parent, Ishvara. Very soon he will become a channel, a willing instrument for the flow of the Will of Ishvara for the good of the world

"The eaters of the life giving remains of sacrifice go to the eternal Brahman. This world is not for the non-sacrificer, much less for the other, O best of Kurus".

Bhagvadgita - IV

Man as the highest product of creation is capable of realizing that it is through sacrifice that life is possible on earth. Life is maintained through sacrifice and jiva evolves through sacrifice. Societies, nations and governments are possible and are capable of functioning through an act or acts of sacrifice. There are various forms of sacrifice for man and some of the common forms are: sacrifice of substance, articles and wealth. Self - restraint and self - discipline are also forms of sacrfice. The penultimate yagnya is the sublimation of Jiva Bhav into the Ishvara Bhav This is so well expressed by Sri Aurobindo. "The ascent to the divine life is the human journey, the work of works, the acceptable sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification of his existence". Then there are many other sacrifices for the jiva which have self purificatory and developmental values and which make a man a benefactor of humanity.

THE WORLDS-VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

The physical world is the visible world which we feel with our senses. There are even many parts of this world quite subtle which science discovers for us. This is the Bhurloka.

There are other worlds which are invisible. People with physical bodies live in the visible world. Those who give up the physical bodies pass on to an invisible world the Bhuvaloka, and on shedding of the pranamya kosha they go to svahloka. These three are Known as Triloka.

The jiva is bound to the wheel of birth and death in these three worlds. The Triloka - the three worlds - begin and end with a day of Brahma. Four other great lokas or worlds complete the Brahmanda but these last throughout the life of Brahma.

Bhurloka is partly visible and partly invisible to us. In Bhurloka the prithvi tattva is the basis of all forms. It exists in seven modifications - solid, liquid, gaseous, radiant, etheric, super-etheric and atomic. These last four modifications are spoken as "the ethers". In Bhuva loka the "Apas tattva" is the basis and in Svahloka the basis is the Agni Tattva.

The jiva has five shcaths or covers. These are Anamaya kosha, Pranamaya kosha, Manomayakosha, vijnanamaya kosha and Anandmaya kosha. The sthulasharira or solid body is the same as the Annamaya - kosha. made of solids, liquids and gases. The sukshma sharira or subtle body includes the Pranamaya kosha and Mannomaya kosha. In addition to these it includes another kosha, the vijnanamaya kosha, the knowledge sheath.

The sthulasharir contains the sense organs - jnanindriyas and the organs of action - karmindriyas, but the centres which direct and control both these sets of organs are in the sukshma sharira. At death the sukshmasharir gets saparated from the sthulas-

sharira. The Annamaya kosha is left behind while the jiva stays in Pranamaya, manomaya and other koshas.

The time taken to relinquish the Pranamaya Kosha and the denser elements of the Mannomayakosh depends upon the individual's desires and cravings for earthly pleasures,at the end of satisfaction of which these two koshas also fall off.

After some time depending on the exhaustion of the cravings etc. the jiva returns to the earth. The jiva again acquires Pranamaya and Annamaya kosha inaccordance with the karmic load. This cycle of life and death goes on till the jiva gets purified through selfless work, yagnyas, worship, meditation, yoga and Jnyan. He then becomes a sort of co-worker with Ishvara by retaining his vehicles for service of the society or the vehicles are thrown away and the jiva enters into Brahman.

"At the end of many births the man full of wisdom cometh unto me, "Vasudva is all" sayeth he, the mahatma, very diffictult to find."

Bagwadgita VII - 19



PART II

GENERAL HINDU RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS AND RITES

There are certain customs and rites, over and above, the basic principles of Sanatana Dharama. Every religion prescribes a number of ceremonies or rites, to be performed by its followers. The use of these ceremonies, speaking generally is : (1) to help the Jiva to conquer and purify his sheaths, (2) to bring to his aid superior intelligences. such as the Devas and Rishis, (3) to improve the atmosphere around him and so make it easier for him to steady and concentrate his mind.

To this end certain material objects, gestures, postures and sounds-mantras-are carefully arranged to bring about the results aimed at.

The objects used are chosen for their good magnetism. Gestures and postures mostly affect the Pranas-the life breath-that circulate in the body. Sounds are used for many purposes. Sounds when used properly give rise to vibrations which are regular and even. These vibrations affect the sukshmasharira and make its vibration regular. This helps in the steadiness of thought and in giving rise to devotion.

Sounds attract the attention of the Rishis and Devas and they also drive away bad magnetic influences.

These sounds are Mantras. A mantra is a chain of sounds arranged in a regular order. If the sounds get disarranged, the vibrations are changed and the result sought for is not achieved or perhaps a contrary result is achieved. It is for this reason that a mantra cannot be translated.

If the man who utters a mantra is not living a good life the mantra vibrations and his own counter sukshmasharira vibrations will shake him badly and do him some harm. On the other

hand the utterance of mantra will help and aid the man of good resolve. Mantras affect the subtle matter more than the dense and hence silent repetition is more powerful than the audible recitation.

There are forty ceremonies-Samaskars-in the life of a Hindu. The list giving the names of these Samaskaras is appended at the end. Now, however, only four are a little known. These are Annaprashanam, Chudakarnam (tonsure), Upanayana and Vivaha. Out of these only two Upanayana - the sacred thread ceremony and vivaha are practised. The thread ceremony marking the beginning of the student stage of life is often postponed and there is a juxtaposition of the thread ceremony and vivaha which is entirely unwholesome.

SHRADHA

Shradha known as Preta-Kriya is the name of the ceremonies performed in the name of the departed Jiva by the living ones in the world. The visible body : the Annamaya kosha, after death of the jiva is carried to the burning ground, so that it is dissolved into its constituents very quickly. The ashes are gathered on the third day and thrown into running water generally in a sacred stream. When the Annamaya kosha is destroyed, the Pranamaya Kosha rapidly disperses. This dispersal is quickened by some of the mantras used at the cremation. Burning is the best way of disposing a dead body. This is important for the departed jiva as also for the living jivas. So long as the Annamaykosha remains undissolved, the Pranamayakosha hangs & hovers round it, in consequence of the magnetic attraction between them. The jiva is thus linked and bound to the earth which is bad for him. A slowly decaying body in the burial ground also effuses poisonous gases.

The Shradhas performed after the cremation help in rearrnging the material of the Manomaya kosha. The sapindikarma ceremony helps the jiva to pass from Pretaloka to Pitriloka.

Shradhas in the original form are not now performed by many. Shradhas are performed specially in the Kashmir Valley but these are not now being given so much importance under the fast changing conditions due to lack of time on the part of the performers and paucity of efficient purohits. In the near future, possibly even the present number of Purchits will get reduced and it is just possible that not all will be able to solemnize Shradha.

SHCUCHAM

Shoucham or Shouch means to keep and to maintain the purity of the body and mind.

Physical purity ensures physical health and strength. Disease is a sign that some law of nature has been disregarded. Rishis have treated obedience to the laws of nature as a religious duty, because the laws of nature are the laws of God. These are expressions of His Being and the jiva is a portion of God enveloped in matter.

The visible body Anamayakosha with its invisible double, the Pranamaya kosha are made of physical meterial, The visible body is composed of particles drawn from the food we eat, the liquids we drink, the air we breathe and from a constant rain of minute particles, too tiny for us to see, that fall upon us continually from the people and the things around us. Matter is made of tiny living things called atoms and of other tiny living things that are collections of atoms. There are grades upon gardes of these minute lives, microbes and virus. These microbes and other smaller living minute particles are all floating in the air and many such particles are being given off constantly from furniture, clothes, animals, human beings and other articles. Everything near us and still everything we touch gives us some of its particles and we give it some of ours. If we are to be healthy, we must keep the surface of the body clean by frequent washing & bathing. The whole body must be bathed and well rubbed at least once everyday. To eat with unwashed

hands is to run the risk of soiling the fəod with dust and other injurious particles. The garment next to the body should also be clean.

The outer world is the symbol of the inner and so mantras are enjoined to be repeated for the inner purification with outer purificatory acts.

The purity of the Pranamayakosha depends on the magnetic currents in it. It is quickly affected by the magnetic properties of surrounding objects, vegetables and flesh. The alcoholic emanations affect it much. This kosha is more affected by its own Manomaya kosha and by the Manomaya kosha of others. The purity of the Manomaya kosha depends on the purity of its own inner thoughts and desires. A man may observe the rules ot Shauch to the last point of strictness. but if he is proud. passionate, harsh, vain, suspicious and immoral, he is pouring impurity into these two koshas faster than any rules can wash it out. In the eyes of the Rishis and Devas such a person is ever ashouchi.

The body is purified by the water, the mind by truth, the soul by knowledge and austerity, thə reason by wisdom".

Manusmriti V. 109

"Verily there is no purifier In this world like wisdom".

Bhagvad Gita IV-38

Shouch essentially consists in hygienic and moral living. In the present times with the use of soap, detergents and disinfectants physical purity can very well be guaranteed. Pure food, fresh leaves, fruits, grains, roots, pure water and milk go to build the body and add more life to it. Stale, distegrating and decaying foods are liable to give rise to diseases and hence these are impure foods. In this category are infusions of herbs in water like tea, coffee, cocoa and fermented liquor like wine and alcoholic drinks.

Extremes are always bad. To carry shouch to touch me not point and to delimit and narrow down Sanatan Dharama, to the

kitchen is illogical. On the other hand strict moral living can be & is enjoined by Dharama Shastra which has been and is sacrificed on the alter of touch me not and kitchen religion.

THE FIVE DAILY SACRIFICES

There is a law of yajna - of sacrifice, and the glory of man consists in working voluntarily with it.

There are numerous sacrifices and some of the important ones have been referred to already under this basic principle. There are, however, five great sacrifices to be offered everyday. These are:-

1. The sacrifice to Rishis. or Vedas
2. The sacrifice to Devas.
3. The sacrifice to Men.
4. The sacrifice to Pitris
5. The sacrifice to Butas.

Each of these has an outer form and an inner meaning. In the outer form perhaps none of these are practised these days. So it is advisable to refer to their inner meaning. In this form all these sacrifices are with us and these need to be adhered to in order to lead a culturally rich life.

The outer sacrifice to the Rishis or Vadas, is study and teacting. Everyday a man should study some sacred books and acquire knowledge to understand himself, his position and his duties. The inner meaning is that all study should be a sacrifice, learning, in order that we may teach others.

The sacrifice to the Davas is the daily "Homa-vashdev Viyarthi." The inner meaning of this is the realisation of our relation with super-physical worlds and of the inter-dependence of the worlds. Man must learn to be in harmony with nature and in accord with all that lives.

The sacrifice to the ,Pitris' is the "Tarpana". The inner meaning is the recognition of the great debt we owe to the bygone generations. It is they who toiled and laboured, refined the culture,

built a rich civilization and handed over the same to the posterity. No one is truly human who does not recognise this fact and accordingly respects and honours his ancestors.

The sacrifice to Men is the hospitality to be shown to all. The inner meaning is the duty of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering homeless and comforting the sad. In reality those who are rich are the stewards of the poor.

The sacrifice to Bhutas is putting aside a little food from the daily meal for the invisible lower entities around us, for the animals and others. The inner meaning is the duty of caring for those who are beneath us in the human and lower kingdom. This is the practice of kindness and consideration towards them.

The five great sacrifices teach man his relation with all around him, with his superiors, his equals and his inferiors. These establish a harmonious relation between man and his surroundings. Man has to preserve the ecology in nature and this will lead to happiness and prosperity of families and nations.

WORSHIP

Man has an eternal longing to come into conscious relation with the Lord of the universe, with Ishvara, with the great Life, of which he is a part. This need of man finds its satisfaction in worship. Worship is the expression of love to the Supreme, of reverance towards Him, of aspiration to reach Him in conscious communion, of longing to be united with Him, to feel the unity of the individual self with the Supreme Self.

The worship may take any form and it does take many forms. The All, the unconditioned, is never an object of worship. The Saguna Brahman, Ishvara with his attributes is the object of worship. He may be adored as Shiva or Vishnu, as Mahadeva or Narayana, as Durga or Lakshmi, as Ganesh, Indra, Agni, Saraswati or in the form of His Avataras—Ram, Krishna, or Buddha; but under whatever name and form, it is Ishvara who is worshipped

Puja is the general simple form of worship. Upasana includes many forms of worship including the daily Sandhya, Japa and meditation.

THE FOUR ASHRAMS

Nations have their own characteristics. The characteristics of Hindus are order, balance and eguilibrium. The vedic Dharama stamped these characteristics on the peopie and in this way gave shape to a very dignified type of man, evenly developed and well balanced,

The underlying thinking for these quarities is the view of life presented In the vedas. All things exist in and for the sake of Atma. the Self and by His will. He wills to unfold his powers in His manifestations from stage to stage of evolution and then becomes the self conscious rule in the outer realms of denser matter. There is no haste in this process of systematic harmonius and orderly development. The seed, the root, the stem, the leaves, the flower, the fruit succeed each other in due order and each has its place and its beauty in its season. In the same manner infancy, childhood, youth, maturity — adulthood and old age and it is not for man to break the sequence.

The jivatma in man, however, clouded in matter, ignorance, sometimes or often pushes irregularly in various directions led by Manah, dominated by Karama. The child becomes a youth, the youth a man and the old man grasps back at the joys of youth. All thls robs life of its serenity and so half of its usefulness.

Inorder to foster order and balance in the society, the great Reshis marked four definite and major stages in the life of an to death and assigned definite duties to these. These stages are Brahamcharya, the stage of studentship, Grahasthya, the stage of a house-holder, Vanaprastha, the stage of retirement and social service; Sannyasa, the stage of total renunciation and lok Kalyan.

In none of these stages must the man grasp at the special duties of the other three. The student must not be a ho-

useholder or a recluse. the householder must not be a celibate, a recluse. The recluse. the retired man must not seek again the joys of the household, and the ascetic must not long after the quiet attachments of the recluse.

In modern times the Ashramas cannot be lived exactly according to the details of the ancient rules, because the living conditions have changed. A clear conception of the fundamental duties of each stage of life will help immensely in bringing in order and poise. In the studentship stage the growing youngman must be chaste in thought and deed, a celibate in mind and body. Only the pure in thought and in body can enter untainted into a happy household life. Premature age, weakness, disease, race decay originate from student marriage, against the ancient Law. A student must be hardy and simple in his habits, rise early, take plenty of exercise and take simple nutritious diet with plenty of milk. This will develop him into an alert, strong hard muscled, vigorous and active healthy man A student must also strive for the virtues of industry, obedience, humility and seviceableness. All these will help to fit him well in the manhood stage.

The household stage is entered at marriage, when the youth has completed his school and college career. Of all the Ashrams this is the most important, for it supports all the others. The welfare alike of the family and of the community or nation depends on the householder. A good husband, a good father, a good citizen is the noblest of men. The home is the school of unselfishness, compassion. tenderness purity, help-fulness, prudence, industry right judgment charity etc. The degradation of the ideal of the householder has made modern life petty and sordid. The bad custom of child marriage has created confusion of duties and has deprived it of its ancient solemnity and dignity.

It is the child or student marriage which has developed and fattened the dowry system. During the student stage the youngman is still dependent for his sustenance on his parents and so inspite of his education and talents the youngman allows

himself to be sold in the market for a dowry. It reflects very badly on the character and qualities of the youngmen and it also shows how weak and coward our young educated women are who acquiesce and allow this debilitating and degrading system to continue.

Household life is the field for the cultivation of virtues. Rearing of a family, helping the new lives to grow into educated healthy youngmen and women are the austerest of penances. They that run away from their duties fall into sin. Mahabharta says, "To eat the remnant of the fcod left after halping the needy is to eat the remnant of sacrifice".

The third Ashrama begins round about official retirement age when the sons are able to bear the burden of their duties and when the signs of age appear. This is the time when the grahasthya and his wife must surrender the hardship of the home to his son or sons. This is the time for him to retire from active life. take to study and to social service.

Now a days generally a reverse process is seen in the community. The garhasthya instead of mentally and emotionally becoming a vanaprastha at this age, interferes and meddles more and more in the home making process of his son. He tries to assume dictatorial powers in the family. This gives rise to a series of conficts resulting in much confusion and heart burnings on either side. In majority of cases this results to his own detriment.

The non-adherence to the Asharam Dharama at this stage as also in the last stage has harmed the community much. The social life, the socio - dharmic life of the community is starving. Able, talented and experienced persons would have become available for social. community oriented co-operative and Dharmic projects. The paucity of efficient honest social leaders has greatly harmed the community.

In the last Ashrama, in oldage, a man living completely a detached life has to achieve personal and a wider social good. This may consist in personal meditation and worship; in active

Lok seva through physical, financial, mental exertions. All this at this stage, will help an individual to enter willingly the life beyond death, to reap the fruits of a well spent earthly life, here-after to return for further evolution.

THE FOUR CASTES

The social organism in a full fledged society can be described by means of its broad functional units. In the social polity of sanatan Dharama, four divisions were recognised. These are Brahman, Kshattriya, Vaishya and shudra.

In Hinduism truths(always abstract) and subtle ideas are conveyed through writing but for mass consumption, for right understanding. these are broadcast through graphics, 'painting, Sculpture and figurative art.

The function and the position of the four social divisions of a society are figuratively expressed in Rig Veda. "The Brahmana was His mouth; the Rajanya was made His two arms; His two thighs the vaishya; the shudra was born from His two feet".

These are the divisions existing in any society past and present. These divisions were never meant to become static and hereditary. May be in the ancient past a son of a Brahman was qualitatively a Brahman and the son of a vaishya was temperamentally and functionally a vaishya. Castes are functional groups determined by qualities and conduct. Mahabharata proclaims this: "Not birth, nor samskaras, nor study of vedas, nor ancestry are the causes of being twice-born (Brahman), conduct alone is verily the cause thereof".

But through the ages the castes became heredi ary, rigid and immobile. Each caste got split into a number of sub castes and these in turn became socially inert and insular.

The caste in due course provoked opposition and antagonism. Instead of mutual service and goodwill caste has become a source of social bitterness. It has harmed India on a big

scale. Hindus would never have been subjected to alien rule if it were not split into watertight caste divisions.

In the present days caste vested interests are responsible for so much in-fighting and bitterness. The Government of India is working for a class-less casteless society but the day seems to be far off. The political parties are often caste bound. The communist philosophy originated with class struggle and so it divided the society into only two castes: the bourgeois and proletariat and the party is working for the proletariat.

Ancient Greeks and Romans divided the society into upper and lower classes. The lower class was the working class with no civil rights. The Hindu varnashram was, however, based on natural ability and aptitude. Perhaps the higher castes and specially the Brahmans tried to preserve tne purity of blood and in the process developed immobility. Modern research seems to point to blood types and transfer of genes from parents to the offspring.

It is good and advantageous to transfer rich genes to children through selective marriages but it is far more advantageous to preserve the culture and to develop it through rich education. The social heredity will play no smaller part in the transfer of the goods of the culture and it is sure to mitigate the defeciency if caste stranglehold is loosend.

"Pearls are obtained from coarse sea-shells and even nectar from poison." So let talent spring forth from even a shudra and let him become a Vedic Rishi.

PART III

ETHICAL TEACHING

RALIGOUS BASIS OF E ETHICAL LIVING

Ethics is morality, right conduct. The object of morality is to secure the welfare of all beings. The rationale of conduct is to find out how to live in harmony with each other and with the surroundings. In modern scientific terms right conduct is that which will not disturb the Eco-system (Ecology) in nature. Nature, the Brahmand is one organic whole. The sanatan Dharama proclaims that "self is one." There are indeed many appearances, many selves, but they are all portions or reflections of the One. The separateness is temporary, their unity is eternal. The Ethical Science recognises the unity of the self in all.

The foundation of right conduct is that what injures one really injures all, what helps all is the only thing that really helps each. In hurting another we are really hurting ourselves. If a hand cut the foot of its own body, the blood would flow from the foot, not from the hand; but very soon the hand would become weak. If one man wounds another, the wounder suffers as much as the wounded, only the suffering takes longer in making itself felt.

The one self is in all beings. Every jivatma is a portion, or a reflection, of the ONE SELF. Shvetashvataropanishat says; "one God hideth in all beings. He pervadeth all. He is the inmost self of all beings. He superviseth all actions. He is the resting place of all beings. He is the witness, the consciousness the one above limitations and qualities. Thus the foundation cf Ethics rests on Dharama-religion.

The mark of Dharama is Achar-good conduct. Achar is the highest Dharama, declared by the shruti and the smriti. Good conduct is to be differentiated from bad conduct. This can be done by knowing what is right and what is wrong. Vedic Dharama proclaims that two paths make up what is called evoluation. The will of Ishvara in His aspect of Vishnu is guiding His Universe. To work with this will is Right, to work against

it is wrong. The two paths are pravritti Marga and the Nivritti Marga. The pravritti Marga is path of going forth-out going. In this the jiva builds himself into a separate individual by taking all he can from outside. The Nivritti Marga is the path of return-in going. Here jiva seeks to realise himself as one with all by sharing all he has with all who need. All that lessens separateness and leads towards unity is Right; all that increases separateness and leads away from unity is wrong. Manusmritti says:

"To give joy to another is righteousness; to give pain is sin."

"Let not any one do an act that injureth another, nor any that he feeleth shame to do."

„Let him not do to another what is not good for himself".

lord Krishna speaks of Divine and Asuric properties. Divine are those which promote union and Asuric those which promote separateness. So, fearlessness, cleanliness of life, steadfastness in wisdom, alms-giving, self-restraint, austerity, straignt forwardness, harmlassness. truthfulness, absence of wrath, peacefulness, compassion to living beings, forgiveness, fortitude, purity and absence of envy and prfde are divine properties. Hypocrisy, arrogance and conceit, wrath and also harshness and unwisdom are Asuric qualities.

The discharge of a duty is called a virtue, the non-discharge of a duty is called a vice. A virtuous man recognises his duties, his obligations and fuifils them; a vicious man does not recognise nor fulfil them.

Truth is that which is Real. The Real is the Eternal Brahman. Truth is the Divine Nature. All the laws of Neture are expressions of Truth. The greatest truth of all is, the unity of the self amidst the diversity of the Not-self. The form which this great truth takes in Ethical science is that each one of us should feel for other selves as for himself, should feel himself to be the same as, or at least similar to, otherselves; and, so feeling, we must always tell the truth, because to tell a falsehood to another is to regard him with distrust, to regard him as separate from, or even opposed to oneself, to prevent him from sharing

with oneself in a common knowledge, which should be the same for all when all are as one. Truthfulness promotes union, while untruthfulness increases separateness. Truthfulness has always been a marked characteristic oi the noble characters described in Hindu literature.

Virtue consists in the discharge of a debt in the full discharge of one's obligations. A Hindu is born with three debts. These are the debt to Devas, the debt to Ancestors and the debt the Rishis. The debt to the Devas is to be paid through self discipline, Lok seva and social Service. This is yajna-sacrifice. The debt to the Ancestors is to be paid by marrying at the proper time for producing progeny. The debt to the Rishis to be paid through study and scholarship.

Bhagvadgita has this to says:

"He who on earth doth not follow the wheel thus revolving sinful of life and rejoicing in the senses, he, O Partha, liveth in Vain".

It is only after discharging the three debts that a Hindu can turn his mind to moksha.

Truth is the name of that which is unperishable, unchanging, Eternal. The thirteen forms of Truth are :—

Truthfulness, equality - impartiality - self control, absence of envious emulation, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, absence of jealousy, charity, thoughtfulness, disinterested philanthropy, self possession and unceasing and compassionate harmlessness.

The triple control of mind, speech and body results in righteousness, in right character, expressing itself in right conduct. The man who puts himself in right relation with the things nearest to him, his own emotions, mind and body is able to practise these virtues.

Worship given to Devas, to the teachers and to the wise purity. straightforwardness, continence and harmlessness, - are called the austerity of the body.

"Speech causing no annoyance, truthful and beneficial, the practice of the study of the scriptures, are called the austerity of speech.

"Mental happiness, equilibrium, silence, self control, purity of nature - this is called the austerity of the mind".

Bhagwadgita

There is no need io pursue the topic of virtue and vice any further. There are injunctions given separately regarding virtue and vice in relation to superiors, equals and inferiors.

It is better and profitable to summarise the Ethical teachings so well discussed in detail in the Shastras. The summary made available by the Vedic Parmarth Ashram, Bombay brooks no improvement. It is reproduced here in full.

The significance of the word Dharama as applicable in our context bears ten characteristics, namely :—

1. Dhriti - or perseverance and patience.
2. Kshama - or unpertubedness.
3. Damah - or self control.
4. Asteya - or honesty.
5. Shaucha - or internal and external purity.
6. Indriya Nigraha - or sense control.
7. Dhi - or intelligence.
8. Vidya - or applied knowledge.
9. Satya - or the truth.
10. Akrodha - or peace.

The moulding of the above Ten Characteristics in our life is Dharama and a person who practises these as part of his very nature is a Dharmatma. Dharama when crystalised in a Dharmatma becomes a part of his nature so much so for instance that in speaking the Truth he is not to think of the how, why and when of it. He speaks nothing but the Truth instantaneously by his nature just as in the winking of his eyes, the person has not to think of the how and why of the winking. He winks by the very nature of his being.

Thus the practice of the Ten Characteristics has tobe developed by a strict self-discipline so that when an occasion arises we need not have to think how to behave in the reflection of the Ten Characteristics of Dharama. One developed nature leads to another until all the ten are achieved.

A SHORT ANALYSIS.

The entry into the Vedic Dharama is not through a prio condition of a blind belief. The basic principles of Shruti ar natural laws in operation in the cosmos. These are apparent i the working of natural laws on the earth.

Science also has all through been trying to find out the basic cause operating in nature. The whole edifice of Science is, however, base on the cycle of causes and effects. Nineteenth century Science, now generally known as classical Science, was entirely basd on the mechanics of causes and effects. Infact an entire body of Science got built that way. In the present days when Science is entering into subtle recesses of nature, the search is always to unearth the basic cause. or causes. Even the longest far distant telephone call to Moon must have a connecting link, howsoever, subtle and etherial. And then what about life ?. Is it born out of an accident in nature ? Can it have no connecting link with its origin or originator ? Does not a graded series of life on earth point to a grand design ? And then what about the whole gamet of energy which ultimately is at the basis of matter ? And what is matter ? In the words of Shri Aurobindoo "a form of the spirit, massed consciousness". Surely there is a source, a self sufficient. self working, Primal Consciousness, which the Vedas describe by the nearest attributes of SAT, CHIT, ANAND, SATYAM, SHIVAM, SUNDARAM. To this truth Science today is tending, slowly but unwaveringly.

The Cardinal Principles of Vedic Dharama are self operative. It is for a human being, for his own good to cognize these and so to live and work as not to hamper the working of these Laws. A clear understanding of Rebirth and Karma, for example will automatically set man on the path of Ethical Living. These will as they soak well in a man, make him a moral man.

What is the present day civic life ? Is it not the product of a huge bundle of Penal and other codes ? Stop the operation

of these codes for a day and see what confusion, chaos and crime is the result. The fine Vedic truths make man responsible to himself for actions, these educate a man to delve deep into his divine nature, to explore his own innate source of power and beauty. This if attempted rightly has the capacity to develop rich personality in man. Then knowldge will flourish and flow from really good moral men. And this will give rise to a good responsible society.

The principle of Yajna-Sacrifice, is also operative all through. It, however demands to be put in active operation consciously on both the individual and the social levels. In the inmost sense the Vedic Sacrifices Symbolise the Supreme Sacrifice of the Purusha. His act of self losing in his creation gives rise to a long chain of sacrifices. The creation by following the law of sacrifice gets back to its source in Him, in His Creative Force.

Yajna, the external ceremony - the Ritual of Sacrifice - performed by a man symbolises man's inner Consecration to the powers-gods - for the help in achieving victory over the forces of Darkness so that his life may develop its divine fulness and prosperity. This, however, is the lowest form of sacrifice undertaken by the man for himself. The Social Yajna is definitely of greater consequence for the man and for the Social Group. It is the sacrifice that gives rise to family and the society. It is also maintained and kept in motion through sacrifice.

By and large the spirit and extent of social sacrifice in the Hindus slackened with time. This weakened the Social fabric and brought in foreign invasions and much suffering. Even after independence the Social Spirit, the Social Yajna is not catching up. This is evident on the national and small community levels. If the Hindu Society and the big and small communities are to live actualy and actively, the collective life must develop the spirit of Yajna. This will develop community life, collective thinking, projects and institutions. The bakward, the handicapped the oppressed, orphans etc, must live and grow through social Yajna. Infact the social Yajna. requires to be put in active operation in various forms.

"Nourishing one another we shall reap the supremest good".

Bhagvad Gita III.

The religious customs and rtes, give shape and colour to the society. In the present context a few important ones require to be retained. These require to be given a form in conformity with the present times. These also require the active collaboration of Purohits. Teaching institutions for samskars, rites etc. are in need of being established. The institution of purohits is to be made viable economically.

The Manu Dharama Shastra is a wonderful comprehensive Socio religous code. But in view of a total change in the society brought about by world wide international causes it is in need of a few amendments. An abridged edition of the amended code requires to be brought out for active circulation.

The ethical teaching if based on religion will have a lasting and a permanent impression on young men. Secular Education does not and should not mean amoral education. Moral teaching with religious basis has the capacity to develop a virtuous man. In absence of this mere hollow, moral precepts have converted all of us into petty cheap working diplomats.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

An attempt has been made to bring out the main principles of Vedic Dharama - Sanatan Dharama. Many truths and many obigations flow from these eternal principles. One of these is the essential unity of creation and more so of man. Jiva is a spark of the Divine Being in the relative world. This binds the votaries of the Dharama into a compact brotherhood.

The one - ness of man, nay that of the whole creation has in course of time, become a vague theoretical idea with Hindus. But in actual practice the votaries of one - ness of creation have stratified the Hindu society into high and low, into touch - me nots on the basis of colour and calling. Men have downgraded women and imposed artificial rules and regulations on them. All this has, in course of time, divided and subdivided the Hindu society and made it a loose disparate mass of human beings. Because of this the Hindu society has been often ridiculed and it has become an easy prey for other proselytizing religious groups,

Over and above forgetting the one - ness of man and the supreme teaching of Vedas we have acquired through the ages, a lot of bad customs, ill - practices and usages etc. under the name of Dharama. All this has brought the great Hindu society to the brink of disaster,

The fact that the cultural basis of any society is provided by its religious faith cannot be denied. Great religions have in their wake created societies. Human beings, when they live togetner in any ordered, collective form, must have a cement for their social fabric. It is only the inner certianty of religion which provides that inner bond. The Vedas, Upanishads Bhagavadgita etc. and the eternal principles that flow from this treasure house have the capacity to bind human beings into a truly compact social unit and then the social group would develop strength and power, to progress and prosper.

Confining ourselves to the small Kashmiri Pandit community the bad socio-religious customs have reduced the community both qualitatively and numerically. A government, howsoever, benevolent, cannot make a dying community to live. An individual here and there may get a job, a scholarship, a promotion etc. but that individual is a part and parcel of a dying corpse-a dying and a decaying community. He is subject to all the community ills and he, in due course, suffers the same fate.

The community is just now passing through a crisis, through a very critical period. Economically we are in a sorry plight, socially we are in confusion and disarray. Both these ills can very easily be traced to our inability to reform and remodel our socio-religious code. we have forgotten that we are brothers unto each other. Because of this forgetfulness we are a disorganised mass. We pull each others legs. We use our energy in somehow belittling our brother, in distorting his image or even in actually downgrading him. We derive pleasure out of this. Let us be ashamed at this sadistic tendency of the community This is, however, a general picture of the community though there are precious exceptions. Our children are always free from these social evils. But as they grow they consciously or unconsciously imbibe and adopt the community traits.

There is tremendous life force and spiritual warmth in the pure vedic-sanatan Dharama. At present it is lying dormant and it is not utilized actively. A mere look at a few Vedic injunctions is sure to throw light on the dark and dingy alleys through which we are just now passing:

1. "You my children shall get together for the benefit of the country On an appointed day you all meet on a particular place and plan for the well being of not only the country but of the universe."

Rig Veda X-191-2

2i "Let us not cut ourselves away either from our past or from the future, thus praying we strive to secure the power of our forefathers." It also says :-

"Common be your prayer,
Common be your end,
Common be your purpose,
Common be your deliberation,
Common be your desires,
United be your hearts.
United be your intentions,
Perfect be the union amongst you."

Rig Veda X-191-3

3. "For the good of the country you may discuss things in privacy and let this consultation be more a type of verifying the identity of thoughts and adding to the strength of the collective body."

Rigveda X-191-4

Vedas, like the manifestoes of political parties, or charters of Governments and the United Nations, assure rich rewards to all those who regard them, follow their mandates and fulfil the obligations These rewards flow in the form of long life, health wealth, happiness peace and spiritual bliss.

We are the inheritors of a superfine culture. We belong to the most pure waters of the grand perennial mountain stream. The stream in the lower levels has gathered moss, and dirt on its surface but the water flowing beneath is serene and pure, Let us, then come together and try to reach the pure waters serene.

Now is really the time to turn the corner, to take a big leap forward, to work out a little revolution and to cry a halt to the self imposed hardships, to the never ending process of genocide.

So, we appeal to the young and old, to men and women, we appeal to the rich and poor of the community, we appeal to all to just stand and resolve to form a compact socio-religious group. The reading on the wall is Now or Never. Immense good and happiness will follow if we give shape to a small or

a big compact united social group bound by a simple socio-religious code, based on the Eternal values of Shruti and the healthy aspects of the Hindu culture.

We refrain from giving a new name to this disciplined, well knit social group. May be a new name will make our work easy. Let this be decided by the Representative body to be constituted.

A brief outline of the modified socio-religious code is attempted here.

Preamble

The new social group of the Kashmiri Pandit community shall give a name to itself. This group shall formally give to itself the New Socio-relgious code. Entry into the group shall be through a formal admission. Each new entrant to the group shall declare his allegiance to the social group and to its soco-relgious code. All persons of twenty years and above of age shall have to fill in an admission form. A nominal fee of rupees ten is to accompany each admission form. The name of the new member with full particulars etc. is to be entered in the community Register. The social group will be an independent organisation non-attached to any institutional or non-institutional body. It will conform to a strict code of conduct and be bound by strong cords of discipline in and outside the social group.

Any breach of the official rules of the social group shall be punishable by a formal expulsion from the group. This shall be given due publicity. Re-entry shall rest with the central body of the social group. Re-entry shall entail a fine amounting to not less than rupees five hundred together with some social services to be rendered to the group.

THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CODE

1. The members of the social group hereafter written as S.G. shall be brothers unto one another in word and deed. All are to be treated as equal. There is to be no caste, sub-caste or class division, no high or low, no untouchable on the basis of colour or calling.

If there is only one God and one Atman there can be no discrimination between man and man on the basis of caste, Creed and colour. There can be no untouchable according to Hindu Dharama.

2. The names of the members with full particulars are to be entered in the community register to be maintained by the S.G.

3, The members shall compulsorily attend a central place a Temple or so on sundays at 11 A.M. or at any convenient time to be fixed by the S. G. The meeting shall always begin with a congregational prayer. There shall be discourses on religious topics and matters pertaining to the social group.

4. Yugnopavit or Upanayan and marriage ceremony or vivah shall be made simple and a one day affair. Dowry and giving and taking of cash and other articles shall be prohibited. Ornaments are not worn in the present day and even young married women keep these in chests or in safe custody of banks. All this is unproductive money and so ornaments are now a superfluous commodity. Dijhuru is an age old cultural symbol of Kashmiri pandit married women. It is a distinctive feature of our women folk. "Dijhuru" is just now not worn by many working women because of its captivating gold content. Dijhuru will be retained. It is not, however, to be made of gold and not even of any other base metal. It is to be made of the present day ornamental stone or of any other artificial material on which the symbol of Aum is to be engraved.

In the present times sons and daughters both receive the same treatment in the home. Both get education and other training facilities. legislation exists for girls to acquire an equal share in the paternal property. Because of this fundamental social change in the community the traditional concept of "Stri Dhan" has lost its purpose and its importance. so dowry as an institution should by now have ceased to exist.

In real practice, however, dowry is nowadays used as a husband catching bait by people for their daughters. Direct indirect and even false promises are offered. The gap between the real or promised performance and the expectation often remains uncovered. In this process it is the young married woman who suffers most. This vicious system is generally kept alive by women.

Nearly everyday we read in the national papers about dowry deaths and suicides committed by young women. All these cases belong only to the Hindu community. Dowry as an Institution. as a necessary appendage, in the marriage of a girl is prevalent only in some sections of Hindus. we do not want to perpetuate this dangerous system which reduces many parents to paupers. It also converts many grown up girls into spinsters and compels many newly-wed women to end their lives. This is a system which does not permit a man of average means to live a normal and an honourable life in the Hindu System. It is the paramount duty of any brother-hood, any civilized and cultured Society to make the lives of its members happy and cheerful. It deserves consideration as to what we as a community are doing. We create hardships, we make the lives of not only of parents and guardians of girls miserable but also sow perennial thorns in the lives of young married women. It is because of this that the birth of a girl Is accompanied by sorrow and grief. Is this ordained by a loving, gracious and a kind God? Is not this a man made system? It is because of this that dowry and give and take of money is to be prohibited in the new S. G. Marriage shall be a happy affair all along.

5. There shall be compulsory widow remarriage up to the age of 45. The financial and other assets of those who will not like to re-marry shall be looked into - Beyond this age widows shall be facilitated and encouraged to marry.

The perpetuation of widow-hood is a slur. a stigma on our society. It is the Hindus who are even now trying to revive the cursed Sati Custom. But whether Killed by fire or mentally strangulated sati continues down to our own enlightened times where society continues its power-grip on the woman who is left without the protection of a man. The modern widow is either an object of pity or of suspicion. Standing as spectators around these modern funeral pyres, shall we not stop a moment before we consign yet another sati to the fire of mental agony and listen to another voice from the past, the voice of an enlightened woman of the vedic period : Ghosha, the daughter of Kakshivat whose clarion call to the society is very much and highly relevant even today:

> Rise up, woman, come to the world of the living ;
> Come, the man by whose sipe those liest is lifeless ;
> Be united with this man as his wife,
> Who holds they hand and seeks to be they husband.
>
> Reg veda X.18-8

"I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphans mouth."

Swami Vivekanand

widow re-marriage is a standing necessity, a human problem and a human need.

6. Divorce shall be allowed under certain life conditions. Legislation already exists on divorce in the country. This will be adopted after necessary modifications.

7. A few measure religious customs and rites are to be retained. These are to be given good shape. These are to be printed and made available to all the members of S. G.

The rites pertaining to the death and after death ceremonies are to be modified and made workable in the present changed times.

8. A fixed number of religious and social festivals during the course of a year are to be fixed. These are to be celebrated collectively in a befitting manner.

9. The social group shall not entertain any bias towards its members on the basis of different forms of worship among the members of the social-group. All the temples or centres of worship are to be registered with the society.

10. Temples and places of worship are to be annually repaired and white washed, to be kept scrupulously clean and to be made attractive by means of flower beds and greenry etc.

11. Orphanage/Orphanages are to be established.

12. Admission tothe S. G. is free for any Hindu of any Caste. This shall be done under the rules of S. G.

13. Admission to the S. G. shall also be free to any one belonging to the Non-Hindu group. In this case simple religious rites will have to be performed and a memorandum of conversion shall have to be furnished to the S. G.

14. The S. G. will have its own community hall.



THE HINDU SAMSKARAS

1. Garbhadhana.
2. Pumsavana.
3. Seemantha.
4. Jatakarma.
5. Namakarama.
6. Annaprasana.
7. Chowla.
8. Upanayana.
9. Prajapatya
10. Saumya.
11. Agneya.
12. Vaiswadeva.
13. Samavartana.
14. Vivaha.
15. Deva - Yajna.
16. Pitr - Yajna.
17. Manushya - Yajna
18. Bhuta - Yajna.
19. Bramha - Yajna.
20. Anuashtaka.
21. Parvana.
22. Sthalipaka.
23. Agrahayani.
24. Sarvani.
25. Chaitri.
26. Aswayuji.
27. Agni - Hotra.
28. Agni - Adhana
29. Darsa - Purnamasa.
30. Agrayana.
31. Chaturmasy.
32. Nirooda Pasabandha.
33. Shantaramani.
34. Agnishtoma.
35. Atyagnishtoma.
36. Uktya.
37. Shodasi.
38. Vajapeya.
39. Atiratra.
40. Abdoryama.

Please fill in the form and send the same to the Secretary on the address given below :-

1. Name (Capitals letters) ________________________

2. Age ____________ __(only those who are twenty years and above in age need fill the form)

3. Postal address ________________________

4. Profession ________________________

I think that a representative body be constituted to give to ourselves a modified socio - religious code, as also for introducing Community measures and projects.

(Full) Signature,

Secretary

Kashmir Vedic Bhavan,
S. R. Gunj, Srinagar,
(190002), Kashmir.